

VZCZCXRO9213  
RR RUEHGH RUEHVC  
DE RUEHCN #0128 1380754  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
R 180754Z MAY 07  
FM AMCONSUL CHENGDU  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 2500  
INFO RUEHOO/CHINA POSTS COLLECTIVE  
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHINGTON DC  
RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 3024

C O N F I D E N T I A L CHENGDU 000128

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/CM AND DRL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 5/18/2027

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [SOCI](#) [SCUL](#) [CH](#)

SUBJECT: SICHUAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST SENTENCED TO TWO YEARS

REF: CHENGDU 123

CLASSIFIED BY: James Boughner, Consul General, United States  
Consulate, Chengdu.

REASON: 1.4 (b), (d)

¶1. (C) Summary: Sichuan rights activist Zeng Jianyu was recently sentenced to two years in jail for allegedly "trumped up" charges of business fraud. Zeng was reportedly the first popularly elected deputy to a county-level People's Congress in 1992 and well known for his activism on land, environmental and worker rights. End Summary.

¶2. (C) During a March 18 meeting, Yang Jian (strictly protect) a Chengdu reporter for "People Magazine" (Bai Xing Zazhi) told Congenoff that Sichuan rights activist Zeng Jianyu had recently been sentenced to two years and six months in jail on "trumped up" fraud charges. Yang indicated that Zeng was arrested in Chengdu by police from the southern Sichuan town of Luzhou on December 12, 2006.

¶3. (C) According to Yang, Zeng became well known in part due to his election as deputy to the Luzhou City People's Congress in ¶1992. He was the first People's Congress representative to be popularly elected, and served in that position for approximately nine years. Zeng was also well liked among local Luzhou farmers, Yang continued, because of his advocacy in the areas of worker, environmental and land rights.

¶4. (C) Yang said that in 2001 Zeng was arrested for the first time following his campaign to organize public transportation drivers to protect their rights. He was "falsely" charged with fraud and sentenced to one year, according to Yang. In 2002 and 2003 Zeng became involved with two land grab cases in Luzhou involving more than 2,000 local farmers who were not adequately compensated for their land. Over 3,000 mu of land was expropriated by the government to sell to an investor for development of a coal-fired power plant. When the Luzhou Jiangbei power plant was finished, it failed to control its pollution and significantly affected the lives of local citizens, Yang said. In 2006, partially due to Zeng's advocacy at the national level, according to Yang, the State Environmental Protection Administration declared the Jiangbei power plant one of the country's top 15 sources of pollution. The company was fined 200,000 RMB, but continued operation.

¶5. (C) Yang opined that due to Zeng's work to achieve adequate compensation for the Luzhou farmers and to raise government awareness of Luzhou's environmental problems, he was disliked by local authorities. Yang claimed the local Luzhou government pressured customers of Zeng's family business so they were unable to find buyers for their rapeseed. Zeng then moved to Chengdu and lost a job as a business consultant in Chengdu

because of intense pressure by Luzhou authorities, according to Yang. Zeng was working as the Vice Director of the Sichuan Institute of Rights Protection for Enterprises when he was arrested in December 2006.

¶16. (SBU) Note: According to Internet reports, the Luzhou Public Security Bureau (PSB) failed to notify Zeng's family and place of employment of his arrest within the required 24 hour time period. The police confirmed the arrest to Zeng's family on December 18. Attorneys hired to represent Zeng were reportedly not allowed access to Zeng nor informed of the charges against him. Zeng's wife, Gui Qin, was also repeatedly denied permission to see him. After Zeng was convicted of fraud on February 15, 2007, he appealed the verdict. His appeal was denied and the verdict upheld by the Luzhou Municipal Intermediate People's Court on April 23, according to Internet reports. End note.

¶17. (C) Comment: Yang was introduced to Congenoff by a foreign national academic currently researching the formation of local homeowner associations in China (reftel). According to the foreign national, Yang also recently met with a New York Times correspondent to tell Zeng's story. Yang is apparently trying to generate foreign awareness and support for Zeng.

BOUGHNER